

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested. Claims 5-8 and 18-35 are pending, Claims 18, 34 and 35 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 5-8, 18-19, 21-32 and 34-35 were rejected as being obvious over Riffe (U.S. Patent No. 5,675,375) in view of Smith et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,219,409, hereinafter Smith); Claim 33 was rejected as being obvious over Riffe in view of Smith and in further view of Lu (U.S. Patent No. 6,100,918); and Claim 20 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter.

Claims 18, 34 and 35 have been amended by adopting the suggestions made by the Examiner. It is believed that Claims 18, 34 and 35 as amended comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. However, if the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned so that mutually agreeable claim language may be identified.

Claim 18, as amended, is directed to an apparatus for configuring a virtual terminal that includes a plurality of communication devices. Perhaps there has been some confusion with regard to interpreting the terms of Claim 18, because the plurality of communication devices are intended to receive data (i.e., receivers), but act as “communication devices” that can send information as well as receive it. This is why the term “communication devices” has been used in the claims, and not “receivers”.

The basis of the outstanding rejection is that Riffe discloses all the features of Claim 18, except for failing to disclose a terminal management unit. Applicants respectfully disagree. Riffe merely describes a video conferencing system that uses a telephone, camcorder and television receiver. The outstanding Office Action asserts at line 5 from the bottom of page 3 that the telephone 12 and the television receiver 16 shown in Figure 1 of

Riffe correspond to the plurality of communication devices. However, this reference in Riffe is to a television, which is a receiver that does not send information and therefore is not a communication device. Accordingly, it is believed that Riffe does not teach or suggest configuring a virtual terminal (or communication device) that includes a plurality of communication devices. Rather, Riffe merely teaches the use of receivers for one-way communication. The invention of Claim 18 is directed to communication devices, which support two-way communications.

As acknowledged in the outstanding Office Action, Riffe does not describe an apparatus that includes a terminal management unit as claimed. The outstanding Office Action relies on Smith as describing a terminal management unit (page 4, line 16 to line 7 from the bottom of page 5 of the outstanding Office Action). However, Smith merely describes a no-ring access system and does not teach or suggest a terminal management unit for a virtual terminal. Moreover, the claimed terminal management unit is configured to identify the communication attributes of the plurality of communication devices and identify to which of the plurality of devices are capable of processing the information corresponding to a first content part and a second content part. It is respectfully submitted that Smith is deficient in this regard. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 18 patentably defines over Riffe in view of Smith. For substantially the same reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 5-8, 19, 21-32, 34 and 35, as amended, also patentably define over Riffe in view of Smith.

Claim 33 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Riffe in view of Smith and in further view of Lu. Claim 33 is dependent on Claim 18, as amended, and is believed to patentably define over Riffe in view of Smith as discussed above. Lu does not cure these deficiencies, as Lu is merely asserted for its disclosure of a video conferencing system using a voice unit, TV signal terminal and television, but otherwise fails to teach or even suggest

Application No. 09/745,546  
Reply to Office Action of August 9, 2004

configuring a virtual terminal that includes a plurality of communication devices as recited in amended Claim 18. Accordingly, no matter how Riffe, Smith and Lu are combined, it is respectfully submitted that the combination would not teach or suggest the invention defined by Claim 18, and therefore also fails to teach or suggest the invention defined by Claim 33.

While Applicants appreciate the identification of Claim 20 as containing allowable subject matter, Claim 20 has not been amended in independent form because it is believed that Claim 20 is presently allowable on the basis of Claim 18 from which it depends as also being allowable.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 5-8 and 18-35, as amended, is definite and patentably distinguishing over the prior art. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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